

ATSDR Public Health Investment

Texas

CDC/ATSDR support helps Texas reduce exposures to hazardous substances in the environment

ATSDR funds 25 cooperative agreements to help states build their capacity to assess and respond to site-specific issues involving human exposure to hazardous substances in the environment.

Public Health in Action

Addressing PCB contamination — To address polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) and heavy metals contamination, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) removed soil from a Houston neighborhood, and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) answered public health questions from residents. DSHS partnered with the local health department to address residents' health concerns and inform them about the risks of exposure to contaminants (including lead) and ways to reduce their exposure. The campaign emphasized the importance of residents having their children tested for lead, information that was critical for neighborhood residents since many children younger than 6 years live there..

Key projects

- **Baytown Nurture Nature Festival** — The Texas DSHS participates in this annual festival to educate attendees about fish consumption advisories in the Gulf of Mexico and Galveston Bay Estuary and distribute information about remediation activities at the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site.
- **San Jacinto River Waste Pits** — This NPL site has dioxin contamination and residents are concerned about the perceived increased cancer rates in the area. DSHS collaborated with federal, state, and local partners to conduct outreach informing residents about the site, addressing health concerns, and providing appropriate site-related materials. ATSDR works with states on NPL sites to support their recommend actions to protect the public's health.
- **Donna Reservoir & Canal System** — This NPL site has PCB contamination and eating any fish species is a public health hazard. DSHS partnered with local community groups to develop and provide educational materials warning against eating any fish species from this waterbody. ATSDR works with states on NPL sites to support their recommend actions to protect the public's health.

State Priorities

- **Populations at Risk** — Identifying pathways of exposure and populations at risk to help reduce and prevent adverse human health conditions from exposure to hazardous substances in the environment. DSHS addresses contamination of surface and groundwater, indoor and outdoor air, sediment, soil, as well as contaminated fish and shellfish. ATSDR supports this priority by providing scientific and technical expertise during the health assessment process.
- **Public Health Outreach** — Determining the public health needs and providing education for communities affected by hazardous waste sites. This priority aligns with ATSDR's goal to educate communities, partners, and policy makers about environmental health risks and protective measures.
- **Develop Partnerships** — Partnering with federal, state, and local health and environmental agencies and citizens to address issues related to environmental contaminants.

Texas

Award amount:

\$392,173 per year

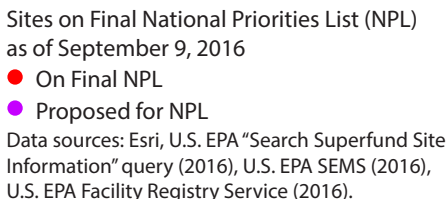
Term: 3 years

Grantee since: 1988

About ATSDR

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), based in Atlanta, Georgia along with 10 regional offices, is a federal public health agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ATSDR serves the public by using the best science, taking responsive public health actions, and providing trusted health information to prevent harmful exposures and diseases related to toxic substances.

- The natural environment of Texas varies from sea level at the Gulf of Mexico to over 8,000 feet in the Guadalupe Mountains of far West Texas and from the semitropical Lower Rio Grande Valley to the High Plains of the Panhandle.
- Texas has many environmental health challenges because it has a large land mass, a large and diverse population and economy, and 387 hazardous waste sites
- With 175 public lakes and 15 major rivers in Texas, determining areas that need fish consumption advisories/bans is challenging.



Follow these links to learn more about programs protecting public health in Texas:

Division of Community Health Investigations (DCHI) — <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hac/index.html>

DSHS Health Assessment and Toxicology Program at —
<http://www.dshs.texas.gov/epitox/hat.shtm>

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